

Message Text

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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SUBJECT: PRC CALLS FOR WELL-TRAINED MILITIA

REF: A. HONG KONG 4146, 1972; B. HONG KONG 9863; C.
HONG KONG A-290, 1970

SUMMARY. PEKING HAS CALLED FOR NEW EMPHASIS ON PROFESSIONALIZING
THE MILITIA, APPARENTLY BOTH TO HELP OFFSET SOVIET MILITARY
STRENGTH AND TO REDUCE THE PLA'S CONTROL OVER INTERNAL
SECURITY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE OFTEN-TWISTING PRC LINE OF MILITIA BUILDING TOOK
ANOTHER TURN SEPTEMBER 29, WITH THE PUBLICATION OF A JOINT
PEOPLE'S DAILY-LIBERATION ARMY DAILY EDITORIAL TITLED "ORGANIZE-
THE MILITIA WELL." THE REGIME'S LAST PREVIOUS PRONOUNCEMENT ON
MILITIA, A JUNE 1972 LIBERATION ARMY DAILY EDITORIAL, SEEMED
DESIGNED TO EASE LOCAL PLA OFFICIALS OUT OF POLITICS AND INTO
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BOLSTERING THE MILITIA, INCLUDING ITS "LABOR, EDUCATIONAL AND

SPORTS" ROLE (REF A).

2. BY CONTRAST, THE PRESENT EDITORIAL STRESSES THE MILITIA'S MILITARY ROLE, PLACING THE MILITIA ON A PAR WITH PLA FIELD AND LOCAL FORCES. WITHOUT SIGNALLING ANY URGENT MOBILIZATION TO DEAL WITH AN IMMINENT THREAT OF WAR (REF B), THE EDITORIAL CAUTIONS: "IT IS ONLY WHEN THE MILITIA TRAINS REGULARLY IN PEACETIME THAT IT SHOWS ITS MIGHT IN WARTIME." THE EDITORIAL ITSELF IS IMPORTANTLY PEGGED TO THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF MAO'S CALL TO RESPOND TO IMPERIALIST "BULLYING" BY ORGANIZING THE MILITIA "ON A BIG SCALE," AND TO "MAKE EVERYONE A SOLDIER," SO THAT "ANY AGGRESSOR" WILL BE UNABLE "TO MOVE AN INCH IN CHINA." MAO MADE HIS ORIGINAL PLEA DURING THE 1958 TAIWAN STRAIT CRISIS, WHEN CHINESE PREPARATIONS FOR WAR AGAINST THE U.S. WERE AT A PEAK. PERHAPS PARTLY BECAUSE WAR CONCERNS DID NOT REACH THAT LEVEL IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS, THERE WAS NO MENTION OF MAO'S STATEMENT ON ITS FIFTH AND TENTH ANNIVERSARIES. NOW, WITH THE THREAT HAVING SHIFTED TO THAT OF AN INVASION BY "SOVIET REVISIONISTS," MAO'S 1958 CALL FOR ORGANIZING THE MILITIA HAS BEEN RE-ISSUED.

3. ANY TRUE IMPROVEMENT IN THE MILITIA'S MILITARY CAPABILITY WOULD OF COURSE BE PART OF A RATIONAL CHINESE DEFENSE STRATEGY VIS-A-VIS THE RUSSIANS, BUT THE NEW CAMPAIGN HAS AN APPARENT INTERNAL TARGET AS WELL. IN THE EDITORIAL, THE MILITIA IS CALLED UPON TO "PREVENT THE RESTORATION OF CAPITALISM" BY "SUPPRESSING REACTIONARY CLASSES AT HOME," "THWARTING ENEMY SABOTAGE," AND "SAFEGUARDING PUBLIC SECURITY." TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THE LAST TIME THE MILITIA WAS SO SPECIFICALLY AND EXTENSIVELY DELEGATED INTERNAL

SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES WAS IN 1964, ON THE EVE OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. AT THAT TIME, THE PLA UNDER LIN PIAO--AND APPARENTLY WITH MAO'S STRONG SUPPORT--WAS USING MILITIA-BUILDING TO COUNTER A GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT THEN BEING CARRIED OUT BY LIU SHAO-CHI'S PARTY APPARATUS.

4. NOW THE TARGETS HAVE BEEN REVERSED. THE PARTY IS BEHIND THE PRESENT PUSH, WHICH SEEMS TO THREATEN THE PLA MOST. IN THE EDITORIAL'S WORDS, " THE PARTY TAKES CARE OF ARMED FORCES." CONTINUING, THE EDITORIAL WARNS THAT THE MILITIA'S ROLE CAN BE CONFIDENTIAL

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"BROUGHT INTO FULL PLAY" ONLY WHEN IT " IS PLACED STILL BETTER UNDER THE CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY." THIS IS AN IMPLICIT CRITICISM OF THE PLA.

5. THE PARTY'S THRUST TOWARD GAINING POWER OVER THE MILITIA, THEN PROFESSIONALIZING IT, COULD BE DIRECTLY DESIGNED TO LESSEN THE POLITICAL POWER THE PLA DRAWS FROM ITS "CONTROL OF THE GUN." THE EDITORIAL SPEAKS OF USING "MILITIA CONTINGENTS OF

ARMEDSWORKERS" TO MEET THE "REQUIREMENTS OF FUTURE BATTLES IN THE CITIES." PROBABLY THE PLA'S MOST SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL REVOLUTION ROLE, AND ONE FOR WHICH IT REAPED SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL REWARDS, WAS ITS PUTTING DOWN OF URBAN DISORDERS. IF WORKERS WERE TRAINED TO PERFORM SIMILARLY IN THE FUTURE, TH MILITARY COULD SAFELY BE MOVED EVEN FURTHER OUT OF POLITICS.

6. CERTAINLY THAT SEEMS THE SIGNAL FROM PEKING MUNICIPALITY, WHERE POLITBURO ALTERNATE NI CHIH-FU--A WORKER, NOT A MILITARY MAN--HAS EMERGED AS "GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE CAPITAL WORKERS' MILITIA HEADQUARTERS" (NCNA SEPTEMBER 30). PROBABLY THIS UNIT REPORTS DIRECTLY TO THE MUNICIPAL PARTY COMMITTEE, WHERE NI IS ALSO NOW A SECRETARY, AND BYPASSES THE PEKING GARRISON COMMAND. AT LEAST THIS IS THE CASE IN SHANGHAI, WHERE THE MILITA IS UNDER THE PARTY COMMITTEE'S "DIRECT LEADERSHIP" (SEPTEMBER 28 BROADCAST).

7. THE MILITARY MAY OF COURSE BE PLEASED TO HAVE THE POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MILITIA BUILDING PASSED TO SOME OTHER ORGANIZATION. IN 1970, WHEN THE PLA STILL DOMINATED CHINA'S LEADERSHIP, MILITIA WORK WAS NEGLECTED BY THE PLA, WITHLOCAL MILITARY OFFICIALS PUBLICLY TOLD TO HANDLE SO-CALLED "CENTRAL TASKS" FIRST (REF C). BUT TODAY, AT A TIME WHEN PLA INSTITUTIONAL POWER IS BEING TRIMMED BACK ELSEWHERE, IT SEEMS MORE PLAUSIBLE TO READ THE JOINT EDITORIAL AS ONE MORE SIGN THAT MAO AND COMPANY'S ATTACK ON THE MILITARY'S POLITICAL ROLE WILL CONTINUE.

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